

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 – 38 (canceled)

39. (currently amended) A process for the production of homogenous single phase thickened beverages suitable for consumption by a person suffering from dysphagia, the process comprising connecting a source of aqueous liquid thickener to by a dispensing machine that is capable of dispensing non-thickened beverages.

40. (currently amended) A process in accordance with Claim 39 wherein the dispensing machine includes a container of thickener concentrate, a switch which selectively controls whether or not the thickener concentrate is included in the beverage, and a metering pump and an in-line static mixer connected to the container of thickener concentrate and designed such that beverages exit the dispenser at the correct thickness, with a homogenous appearance and are ready to drink, whether the beverage thickness is increased by inclusion of the thickener concentrate or not.

41. (currently amended) A process in accordance with Claim 39 wherein the dispensing machine includes a container of thickener concentrate, a switch which selectively controls whether or not the thickener concentrate is included in the beverage, a metering pump, and an exit nozzle, the exit nozzle producing a sufficient

~~with a narrow gap or pressure drop~~ that beverages or and liquid foods exit the dispenser at the correct thickness, with a homogenous appearance and are ready to drink, whether the beverage thickness is increased by inclusion of the thickener concentrate or not.

42. (currently amended) A process in accordance with Claim 39 wherein the thickener ~~used in the thickener concentrate is one or more of alginates (sodium, potassium, or ammonium salts)~~ comprises at least one soluble food fiber thickener selected from the group consisting of sodium alginate, potassium alginate, ammonium alginate, carrageenan, celluloses selected from sodium carboxymethylcellulose, hydroxypropyl cellulose, and hydroxypropyl methyl cellulose, locust bean gum, guar gum, and or xanthan gum.

43. (original) A process in accordance with Claim 42 where the thickener is xanthan gum.

44. (currently amended) A process in accordance with Claim 42 where the xanthan gum is between 0.005% 1% and 10% of the thickener concentrate.

45. (currently amended) A process in accordance with Claim 42 where the xanthan gum is between 0.05% ~~and 5% of the thickener concentrate~~ 0.3% and 1% of the beverage.

46. – 56. canceled

57. (new) A dispensing machine that is capable of dispensing thickened beverages suitable for consumption by a person suffering from dysphagia and non-thickened beverages, the dispensing machine including a source of water, a source of at least one beverage concentrate, and a source of aqueous thickener, the dispensing machine being designed to dispense selectively beverages including the water and the beverage concentrate and thickened beverages including the aqueous thickener and the beverage concentrate, the thickened beverages being suitable for consumption by persons suffering from dysphagia.

58. (new) The dispensing machine of claim 57 further comprising a static in-line mixer through which at least two of the water, thickener and beverage concentrate pass in producing a thickened beverage.

59. (new) The dispensing machine of claim 57 further comprising an exit nozzle sized to produce a pressure drop sufficient to provide thorough mixing of the beverage.

60. (new) The dispensing machine of claim 57 wherein the aqueous thickener is an aqueous thickener concentrate, and wherein the dispensing machine is designed to dispense the aqueous thickener and the water together.

61. (new) The dispensing machine of claim 57 wherein the aqueous thickener consists essentially of water and a thickener comprising at least one member selected from the group consisting of sodium alginate, potassium alginate, ammonium alginate,

carrageenan, sodium carboxymethylcellulose, hydroxypropyl cellulose, hydroxypropyl methyl cellulose, locust bean gum, guar gum, and xanthan gum.

62. (new) The dispensing machine of claim 57 wherein the aqueous thickener consists essentially of xanthan gum and water, the xanthan gum comprising about 1% to about 10% by weight of the aqueous thickener.

63. (new) The dispensing machine of claim 57 wherein the aqueous thickener consists essentially of xanthan gum and water, the xanthan gum comprising about 2% to about 5% by weight of the aqueous thickener.

64. (new) A dispensing machine that is capable of dispensing thickened beverages suitable for consumption by a person suffering from dysphagia and non-thickened beverages, the dispensing machine including piping connectable to a source of water, a container for holding at least one beverage concentrate, and a container for holding an aqueous thickener, the dispensing machine including at least one selectively activated control by which a user can selectively dispense beverages comprising water and the beverage concentrate or thickened beverages comprising the aqueous thickener and the beverage concentrate.

65. (new) The dispensing machine of claim 64 wherein the container for holding an aqueous thickener holds an aqueous food fiber thickener concentrate, and wherein, when aqueous thickener and beverage concentrate are dispensed, water is mixed with the aqueous thickener concentrate.

66. (new) The dispensing machine of claim 65 further comprising a static in-line mixer through which the thickener and the water pass in producing a thickened beverage.
67. (new) The dispensing machine of claim 65 further comprising an exit nozzle having at least one of a narrow gap and a pressure drop sized to provide thorough mixing of the beverage.
68. (new) The dispensing machine of claim 64 wherein the aqueous thickener is an aqueous thickener concentrate, and wherein the dispensing machine is designed to dispense the aqueous thickener and the water together.
69. (new) The dispensing machine of claim 64 wherein the aqueous thickener consists essentially of water and a thickener comprising at least one member selected from the group consisting of sodium alginate, potassium alginate, ammonium alginate, carrageenan, sodium carboxymethylcellulose, hydroxypropyl cellulose, hydroxypropyl methyl cellulose, locust bean gum, guar gum, and xanthan gum.
70. (new) The dispensing machine of claim 64 wherein the aqueous thickener consists essentially of xanthan gum and water, the xanthan gum comprising about 1% to about 10% by weight of the aqueous thickener.
71. (new) The dispensing machine of claim 64 wherein the aqueous thickener consists essentially of xanthan gum and water, the xanthan gum comprising about 2% to about 5% by weight of the aqueous thickener.

72. (new) A dispensing machine that is capable of dispensing thickened and non-thickened beverages, the dispensing machine including a source of beverage, a container holding an aqueous food fiber thickener, and at least one selectively activated control by which a user can selectively dispense beverages with and without the aqueous thickener.

73. (new) The dispensing machine of claim 72 wherein source of beverage comprises water and a beverage concentrate.

74. (new) The dispensing machine of claim 73 wherein the aqueous food fiber thickener comprises at least one member selected from the group consisting of sodium alginate, potassium alginate, ammonium alginate, carrageenan, sodium carboxymethylcellulose, hydroxypropyl cellulose, and hydroxypropyl methyl cellulose, locust bean gum, guar gum, and xanthan gum.

75. (new) The dispensing machine of claim 64 wherein the aqueous thickener consists essentially of xanthan gum and water, the xanthan gum comprising about 1% to about 10% by weight of the aqueous thickener.

76. (new) The dispensing machine of claim 64 wherein the aqueous thickener consists essentially of xanthan gum and water, the xanthan gum comprising about 2% to about 5% by weight of the aqueous thickener.

77. (new) A dispensing machine that is capable of dispensing beverages thickened so as to be consumable by a person suffering from dysphagia, the dispensing machine

including a container holding at least one beverage concentrate, a container holding an aqueous food fiber thickener, and a nozzle through which mixed beverage concentrate and aqueous food fiber thickener are dispensed.

78. (new) A dispensing machine that is capable of dispensing beverages thickened so as to be consumable by a person suffering from dysphagia, the dispensing machine including a source of potable water, a container holding an aqueous food fiber thickener, and a nozzle through which mixed aqueous food fiber thickener and water are dispensed.

79. (new) The dispensing machine of claim 78 wherein the aqueous food fiber thickener comprises at least one member selected from the group consisting of sodium alginate, potassium alginate, ammonium alginate, carrageenan, sodium carboxymethylcellulose, hydroxypropyl cellulose, and hydroxypropyl methyl cellulose, locust bean gum, guar gum, and xanthan gum.

80. (new) The dispensing machine of claim 78 further comprising a computer control system which controls the amount of thickener included in the beverage.

81. (new) A process for the production of a homogenous single phase thickened beverage suitable for consumption by a person suffering from dysphagia, the process comprising admixing a thickener concentrate comprising a soluble food fiber thickener with a liquid food to produce a homogenous single phase thickened beverage in a beverage dispenser.

82. (new) A process according to claim 81 wherein the beverage dispenser comprises: a container of thickener concentrate comprising a soluble food fiber thickener and water, a metering pump connected to the container of thickener concentrate, and a nozzle, the nozzle mixing thickener concentrate, water and beverage concentrate and dispensing a homogenous single phase thickened beverage.
83. (new) A process according to claim 82, wherein the beverage dispenser further comprises a static in-line mixer, the mixer mixing the thickener concentrate and water.
84. (new) A process according to claim 82, wherein the metering pump is a progressive cavity displacement pump, the displacement pump dispensing a predetermined quantity of thickener concentrate when activated for a predetermined period.
85. (new) A process according to claim 81, wherein the beverage dispenser dispenses both thickened and nonthickened beverages.
86. (new) A process according to claim 81, wherein the thickener is clarified xanthan gum.
87. (new) A process for producing a thickened liquid food suitable for consumption by a person suffering from dysphagia, the process comprising dispensing a liquid thickener concentrate containing from 1% to 10% soluble food fiber by weight from a metering pump into a liquid food to produce a thickened liquid food containing 0.10% to 2% of said soluble food fiber thickener by weight.

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88. (new) A process according to claim 87 wherein the thickener concentrate comprises 2% to 5% xanthan gum by weight.

89. (new) A process according to claim 88 wherein the liquid thickener concentrate is dispensed into the liquid food at a ratio of from 10 to 25 grams of concentrate per 120 grams of liquid food.